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A MOST UNBUSINESSLIKE PROCEED. (Continued from first page.)

Henry Middleton sat down with a grim smile on his face, and Miss Warwick bowed and A little later and inquired for Mr. Harley. Mr. Harley had

gope out. Where to? Mr. Harley had gone to show Miss Warwick the places at which she had to call. Miss Warwick had the address; was that not sufficient? Mr. Harley thought she would not know the directions in which

Might it be asked why Mr. Johnson had not got the each ready for the bank? Mr. Johnson had been showing Miss Vernou the exact manner in which Mr. Middleton liked the invoices to be made out. Ha!

"It seems to me, Joseph," remarked Henry re-entering the private office, "that along with the unquestionable advantages of our scheme, there may be-I only say there may be some triffing drawbacks."

Henry Middleton proved to be right in his conjecture. There were drawbacks. For instance, it was singular, and a little inconven-Miss Warwick might have been specially engaged to give them information. There seemed to be more young men in the world than there used to be as Joseph remarked to his several in the outer office at all hours; there on the pavement; and always a glimpse of coattalls vanishing through the doorway, if Joseph and the office-boy looking for matches. or Henry turned at the top of the street to favor

Oppressed with these considerations, Henry the wise delivered himself thus unto Joseph the

"I can't say that I am exactly disappointed with the result of our scheme, but, at the same looked rather foolish too. time, I must confess that it has, so far, scarcely realized my expectations.

firmed, and in some I fear I have been mistaken. I have lately bestowed the most minute observation upon the work, the manner of work, and the amount of work done by the ladies and gentlemen we employ; and have come to the conclusion that, provided they had both received the same training-that is, the same description of training, and occupied the same length of time over it-there would be no very essential difference between the work done by the two sexes. But, of course, we, as practical men of business, have to do with what is, not with what, under other circumstances, might have been. And the fact remains that they have not received the same training, and that considerable difference does

"For instance, I find that the ladies in our do their work by fits and starts, and are cermental application to business. This may partially arise from physical inequality, or it is tainly found to be the case. Again, the former are certainly the less exact of the two. I had really some considerable difficulty in impressing upon them the vital importance of every figure, in every book, being proved to be undeniably and undoubtedly correct. I certainly with which some persons-generally of their own sex -are so ready to credit them, is car-

ried to any great extent into business life. "On the other hand, I find my opinion that they are more amenable to direction and authority confirmed. Indeed, I find it hard, aimost impossible, to rebuke them. They are so humble, and so penitent."

And so pretty-did you add, Henry? Assuredly the thought entered your mind, if it rose not to your lips. Ah, Henry, Henry, have three-score years and a bitter world-fight not vet destroyed thy youthful inability to look sternly on a beautiful face?

"There is, at least, one good point about them, and that is that they are not so cager to get home at night. I suppose the fact arises from their having no particular hobbies, no cricket or foot-ball, or athletics. They are down rather earlier in the morning, and take no longer over their luncheon, except the time wasted in getting ready to go out, which & of course, ridiculous. On the whole, as far as personal intercourse is concerned, they are nation. much pleasanter to deal with, being quicker and brighter in many ways. The other drawbacks connected with them cannot, I suppose, be laid to their charge, and are no doubt unavoidable. Well, well, Joseph, we must take the good and bad together, and perhaps the balance will, after all, be in our favor. Three hundred and ten pounds is not to be despised, and a little training may make them all that we could desire."

CHAPTER II.

The Winter nights were drawing swiftly in, and it became necessary to light the gas long before the office closed. Now it was a singular for her, and was rewarded with a grateful, tear- businesslike thing as love should actually interthing that there existed a strange reluctance in the office of Middleton Brothers to-comply with this necessity. Matches became mysteriously scarce, and a capacity for working in comparative darkness developed itself with surprising swiftness. This, along with many other little annoyances, some of which have been previously mentioned, chafed the soul of Henry Middle ton almost beyond endurance. He became like a simmering volcano; an eruption might at any moment be expected. For a long time he remained in the simmering state, but at length the brother; but giving a stealthy glance to discover it had stormed his last stronghold, he felt comeruption came. Quietly ascending the stairs in what manner the other's self-exaltation pletely overwhelmed. It was indeed, "the one dusky evening, he entered the office. The would display itself, he beheld that worthy unkindest cut of all." Well might he have gas was unlit and, pausing in the shadow of the gentleman vigorously blowing his nose, with addressed his brother in the words of the door, he beheld by the dim light a strange his head turned in the opposite direction. A despairing Casar: "And thou, too, oh,

Miss Verson and Mr. Johnson were standing ing of the brothers' pens. Then another knock. atrical; and when he stopped and faced the culby the window close together-very close to- This time the incomer was Miss Smith. She | prit, he sin ply remarked, with considerable

gether, gazing out on the crescent moon that advanced briskly; she stood about two variabending over her, talking in a low voice, Miss Miss Smith were not twin-sisters. Smith was bolding forth velubly to the warehouseman, and Miss Ramsay was waltzing over

the floor with the office-buy. A moment's amazed contemplation of the scene, and then sharp and stern rang out the voice of the senior partner. Ma Johnson !"

The person addressed looked round with a start that would have "brought down the house" in amelodrams, " Yes, sir."

May I ask what is the meaning of all this "I have been checking a calculation of Miss

Vernon's, Sir."

with a grim smile-" It's a singular thing, that in the space of a few months, you should all become pervaded with such spirit of unsel-fishness. It seems to me the each of you is always doing somebody else's work, and never attending to his or her own. Now, I have a ient, that neighboring firms became absurdly great respect for such a spirit in the abstract, what you do want?" anxious about the prompt forwarding and re- or in domestic or social life, but it doesn't do ceiving of invoices; that junior clerks came in business, ladies and gentlemen, it doesn't do "Indeed. May I inquire your reason for doflitting in two or three times a day, eagerly in- in business,; and I must distinctly state that I ling so?" quiring if such and such an invoice were ready, can no longer allow things to go on as they or bringing invoices for goods bought a few have been doing. I place the matter before hours before. Miss Vernon was engaged in you as it appears from a plain business point of amount of surprise in his tone. exposeulating with these young persons half view. You come to me engaging to do certain the day; and, really, the difficulty she had work, and for the doing of that work I agree to | warehouseman." to make them comprehend her, and to get give you's certain amount of remuneration. I "I should have thought Gudgitt had more -them to go away, was something overwhelm- Now, if instead of doing the work for which you He was about to add "sense" but checked himing. It was singular, too, that forwarding are especially engaged, you are continually dab self in time. Indeed, Miss Smith were a look It dails the keen edge of pleasure and kills the clerks in all the neighboring offices became bling in other people's you break your part that might have inspired discretion in the boldest strangely modest and self-distrustful, and were of the engagement, and cannot, with any show of men. "That is to say, I am glad to hear it, blood. A bottle of Dr. Kennedy's "Favorite perpetually dropping in to make inquiries as to of reason, expect me to keep mine, or retain Miss Smith, and beg to congratulate you."

brother; and, decidedly, they appeared to be tug guiltity to his own desk; Miss Vernon | mantelpiece, though so thoroughly put out that growing very plentiful. There were always checking involves; Mr. Johnson balancing the the usual manipulation of his coat-tails was eneash; Miss Warwick looking over shipping- tirely omitted. were always two or three ascending the stairs notes; Miss Smith writing headings in the ledwhen the brothers went out; always a number ger; the warehouseman gazing thoughtfully eph, that in addition to Miss Version and Miss

about for those who are willing to do so."

the promenaders with a second glance. The | was dictating a letter to the corresponding | her bridesmaid, declares her attendability to brothers at first grew puzzled, and then a little clerk. But Joseph had no need to stand so exist in the office made desole by the absence angry. From the multitude of callers, from close to her, no need to rest his hand on the of her dearest friend. She-iliss flamey-he the noise and bustle, business might have been | back of her chair, and almost speak the words | sought ma with tears in her eyes to release her, exceedingly brisk, and yet the day-book showed in her car. Really, Joseph was becoming fool- and, as the young lady has spent the principal FIFTEEN no perceptible increase in the number of sales, ish in his old age. At forty-eight he should part of her time to teaching the office-boy to dieton Brothers. Certainly he looked foolish much the same position as we were five months

Henry sat down in stern silence, and presently Miss Lawson left the room. Then Joseph. "Things have not gone on exactly as I ex- like all quiet, shy people when laboring under. pected. Some of my ideas have been con embarrassment, could not be silent, and began to pester his brother with all kinds of irrelevant questions and remarks. He received the shortest of replies, and at length Henry looked up and remarked : * Did you ever read the Legend of St. An-

> theny's Temptations, Joseph ?" since that I almost forget it.' "I should advise you to refresh your mem-

ory," returned his brother dryly; and the conversation dropped. Presently at the door there came a timid knock, and, on a summons to enter being given, Miss Veruon stepped shyly in.

As she came forward it was noticeable that certain sprightfiness and sparrow-like sauciness that generally distinguished her had almost completely disappeared, and there was a office are more liable than our male clerks to flush on her cheeks, and a light in her eyes, that could surely have little to do with invoices. She stood by the table with downcast head, folding, unfolding, and refolding a scrap of paper that lay before her, but seemingly unable to speak. Henry had been thoroughly vexed and annoyed, but as he looked at the shy, timid girl, he felt again the consciousness of his utter inability to be angry with her per-

"I came to-to-give you notice, Sir." Notice! Why, bless my soul and body,

what for? Surely you are not so sensitive as

deny was thoroughly well merited ?" "Oh, no; I assure you it has nothing to do with that, Sir ; but I'm-I'm-engaged ?" That word had only one meaning for Henry Middleton; all other associations connected with it had faded away many a weary year

"By what firm, may I ask ?" Miss Vernon grew confused. "By Mr. Johnson, Sir."

"Mr. Johnson! Is he setting up in busi-

"Oh, no, Sir; only in a house." "I see," said Henry grimly, and thereupon ensued a long pause. A pause during which the little scrap of paper became the centre of a series of circles traced by a small unsteady finger, during which the red lips seemed unable to keep quite still, and bright eyes became | with his glittering eye :" clouded, and one hand made diligent search in stocket. These signs were too ominous to be ly engaged to Miss Lawson?" disregarded, and Henry rose in great conster-

" My dear Miss Vernou," he said, placing his hand on her shoulder in quite a fatherly way, "I'm a rough old business man, and I look at all

And Mr. Middleton shook hands with her, and conducted her to the door, and opened it bedimmed smile, that quite melted him. A little sympathy is judispensable to women,

and goes a long way with them. "Beaten at all points," muttered Henry, going back to his desk. "It's a strange thing, all sacred precedent. And yet, as he himself a strange thing."

What is strange, Henry? Strange that you should still have a little fellow-feeling with ly powerless to stop the introduction of this last youthful joy, and youthful love -surely not. For perhaps the first time in his life he felt actually guilty in the presence of his meek | had been hard enough to bear; but now that

was slowly surmounting the house-tops. Miss off the table, with half-folded arms. She wore Warwick was bending over a desk in the shadi- mittens. She was eminently respectable. Mr. est corner of the room, and Mr. Harley was Middleton looked up coldly. Miss Vernon and down and began to write.

was the day of the mouth on which you engag- ing to speak. At last he faltered

"I trust that my work has hitherto given you satisfaction, Sir.' Mr. Middleton bowed.

"It's a singular thing," said Mr. Middleton | that what I have done, I have strove to do well, | gentler. and trust I have done so. I-"

"Miss Smith, I am exceedingly busy; if you would come to the point at once I should be obliged. Do you want a rise ?" "No Sir, I do not."

"Then will you have the goodness to state " I wish to give notice, Sir.'

"I am about to be married. Sir." "Married !" echoed Henry, with a dangerous | Round.

"Yes, married, Sir. To Mr. Gudgitt, Sir, the

certain stations and railways, the particulars re- you any longer in my employ. Please under- The words were accompanied by a glance at garding which appeared in the most inexplica- stand, therefore, that unless you are prepared | the door that could not be mistaken, and Miss ble manner to have escaped their memories. to advere to the terms of the agreement made Smith beat a retreat. Shortly after Mr. Middlebetween us when I engaged you, I must look ton stepped into the outer office, returning in a few minutes looking utterly confounded. He Haying thus spoken, Mr. Middleton stalked dropped into a chair, and sat for a time without into the private office, leaving Mr. Harley steal- speaking; at length he rose and sould by the

> "You will be surprised to hear, Brother Jos into the fire ; Miss Ramsey addressing circulars; Smith, Miss Warwick and Miss Ramsey have just now given me notice. The former is en-When he entered the private office Joseph gaged to Mr. Harley, and the latter, who is to be be growing more dignified, more conscious of waltz, I was only too widing to do so. We are the high position occapied by a partner in Mid- now, by a singular train of circumstances, in enough, and far from dignified, when he caught ago. The question, therefore, is, what are we sight of his brother, and little Miss Lawson to do? It seems to me that engaging female clerks is only an infract way of procuring wives for all the young gentlemen in the neigh

borhood. If things went on as they have been doing we should have to abandon the coru trade, and form ourselves into a Wite Supplying Association, Limited. In sober earnestness, Joseph, I am thoroughly disgusted with the whole affair. We have had nothing but trouble and worry since the beginning of this new s.stem, and I, at any rate, shall be only too glad to get back to the old one. I would'nt go I-I-fancy I have, Henry ; but it is so long through all we did the first day our advertisement appeared for a thousand pounds, let alone three hundred. And then, as I said before, we have had so much trouble and worry, and things have been so unsatisfactory that I am afraid we must allow that our scheme, up to the present, at least, has proved little better than a failure. Indeed, from almost the very first I have had grave misgivings, and now I

> Henry continued: "With one exception we shall get rid of all our females clerks by the end of next month."

must allow that the whole affair appears to me

to have been a most unbusinesslike proceeding."

Henry paused, and Joseph murniared assent.

"Now I propose that we fill their places with properly trained men. The way in which the work and our commercial reputation have suffered more than counterbalance the difference in salaries. We must try in some courteous manner to induce the lady who still remains to leave us. She seems good natured and willing, but I am afraid she is the least capable of any

to be offended by a rebuke which you cannot into Joseph's simple face a quick flush of anger; and when he spoke there was a touch of his brother's sharpness in the tones of his voice. "Do you mean Miss Lawson, Henry ?" His brother looked surprised-something like

a gamecock assaulted by a month-old chicken. "Certainly I do." The flush faded away, the sharpness died out of the voice, the guilty look came back, and

"I wished to say. Henry, if you meant Miss Lawson, that I am-I mean that she is-that is, that we are-"

"Are what, Brother Joseph ?" "Engaged, Henry," Henry gazed at him for a moment in mute leaned his hand on the table, and inquired, slowly and impressively, the while "fixing him "Do you mean to tell me that you are actual

Henry turned around without a word, and paced restlessly up and down. The news came upon him with an absolute shock. Women, at matters from a business point of view, perhaps scheme, had long been to him a kind of abfrom a selfish point of view; and looked at in straction, existing, no doubt, in a far-off sort that way, you know, this engagement of yours of way, but having little or nothing to do with spems, what one might call a somewhat unbusi- practical life, except, as servants or houseresalike proceeding; but, at the same time, keepers. And, even when he had carried his from what I have seen of you both, I believe you scheme into force, he looked on them only as will get on exceedingly well together, and I am | clerks, and nothing more than clerks-in other ire I wish you all possible joy and happi- words, as a description of machine hired at a much per annum. But that they were full of passionate life, and capable of feeling and arousing passionate love, and that such an un-

undreamed-of element.

fere with the making of money and the routine of office work, had never entered into his calculations- in fact, seemed to him absurd, monstrous, a breaking of all faith, a desecration of expressed it, he had been 'beaten at all points;" had been unable even to rebuke them, and utter-Its influence upon those in the outer office

long silence reigned, only broken by the scrap- Brutus?" Henry, however, was not at all the

"Well, I never thought you could be such consummate fool, Joseph," and thereupon sat Joseph, the guilty, the meek, the erring one

cast wistful glances at his brother's face during "I came. Sir, under the impression that this a lengthy and painful silence, longing yet fear-"I trust you have no overpowering objections

Henry in the meantime, had considerably cooled down. Perhaps some flickering memo ries of almost forgotten feeling; perhaps the "I have always striven, I am sure, to do my faint remembrance of loving eres long sinework to the best of my powers, as far as in me dim, or the clasp of a little hand long since lay. There have been drawbacks, Sir. as have dust and ashes; or some touch of real sym kept me from doing things in the exact way I pathy with his simple, patient brother, had and why you are not getting through with your | should have liked; but my habit is not to de- softened him; or the fleeting revelation of ceive anyone, Sir,"-as Miss Smith became more | something higher, something beyond the gathemphatic her h's got decidedly the upper hand ering in of the root of all evil, had flashed of her-" and, therefore, I should like to say scross his mind. When he spoke his tone was

"I don't say, Joseph, that I have any overpowering objection, though, if I had, it is now too late to gain anything by expressing it, You have taken this step entirely on your own responsibility, and, of course, have judged for vourself as to its wisdom; but if you ask for my candid opinion, I must tell you that it undoubtedly appears to me a most-a most"-he sought for another phrase in vain; it sprang to his lips and refused to be set aside-"a most unbusinesslike proceedings."-All the Year

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